2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

tempted it would find himself deserted by his paddlers, luggage deposited in the bush, scrupulously intact, while his paddlers went along the river warning the villages against the malicious bahkra. And there he would remain, set down in the bush, unable to get more paddlers, until hunger made him humble. In the interior there is no means of transportation, no communication, except by Djukas. So on the whole the white man is largely subject to the will of his guides, over whom he has only nominal control; it behooves him to put up with their whims, and to avoid the mistake of trying to command them.

Gradually the canoes float apart, but the talking continues. A thought pops into a black head and is shouted across the intervening water. Questions, answers, continue though the boats are now some distance away from each other. To make their words carry far over the water, the Djukas actually lower their voices, singing out the words in a sustained, resonant tone that makes a mellow sound across the waves. This long drawn-out "Ah-e-e-e" can be heard after the other corial has passed far down the river. Out of sight around a bend, we can still hear the other Bush Negroes intoning strange words.

Not being able to follow the conversation, we ask the cook, Bundle, what it's about. Bundle does not know. The Djukas are not using talkee-talkee now. They are using an obscure tongue. When the Bush Negroes converse with outsiders they employ the talkee-talkee language which white men and Paramaribo Town Negroes can understand. But they also

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

have a tribal language called *odo, deepee-talkee,* or *Saramaccatongo* known only among themselves; they are members of the Saramaccaner tribe.

Before the other corial is out of earshot, the Djukas bid us good-bye with the familiar words: *"Wakka bon na watra, bahkra!" "Gran danke, matio"*—"Many thanks, my uncle," we respond, adding the *o* sound to the last word to make it carry over the waves, as they do. To them "uncle" is the most respectful appellation that can be used, similar to our respectful use of the word "father." For them a maternal uncle is more important than a father.

For a while now the poling continues in silence. Further on we pass a lone Djuka on the bank, skilfully setting a fish trap constructed of sticks and *lianas.* Far away upstream can be heard the muffled report of a shotgun; some black hunter is bringing in game. The angry currents slap constantly against the side of the corial. We round another bend and see ahead only more rapids, where rocks make innumerable white ripples in the muddy water.

A stop is made for lunch at one of the many islands. Bundle brings out canned food and the gipsy pot. The river looks enticing and cool. The bahkra begins taking off his clothes for a swim in the water near shore. The Negroes are abashed at his nakedness, and Bundle tactfully advises him to be more modest.

The waters in this part of the great South American rain forest are infested with the Brazilian piranha or piraya (*Serrasalmo sp.*), a species of carnivorous fish. They are small,

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner
Saramaccaner
Boni

619 184 In general appearance and culture the Aucaners vary little from the other large tribe, the Saramaccaners.

[531] The art motifs and their treatment as displayed on the Aucaner wood carvings as a rule differ from those of the Saramaccaners. On the other hand, some of the pieces were found to be practically identical.

The Aucaner talkee-talkee also differs from that of the Saramaccaners, the former being more like the speech of the [197 198 191] Town Negroes. The Aucaners have no deepee-talkee or odo as have the Saramaccaners, but they have a dialect known as *Koropina* where a *p* or an *m* is spoken before the vowels in a word for the purpose of confusing strangers. A similar custom is prevalent among the Negroes of Curaçao, Dutch West Indies.

[291] The dress of the Aucaners is the same as that of the Saramaccaners, excepting that they affect more often the breast-cloth, the *wassapangye*, and the head-cloth, the *mussu*.

Among the Aucaners the toga garment is called the *yembah*, while it is called a camissa by the Saramaccaners. The barrier of palm leaves is called *chifunga* by the Aucaners and *azang pau* by the Saramaccaners.

[262 606 194] The system of food taboos and general culture are the same. There is no mother-in-law taboo among either the Aucaners or the Saramaccaner tribe.

[161] 648 The Boni tribe, which consists of about 900 people, is descended from escaped slaves who crossed the Marowyne River into French Guiana and who were allowed to remain there unmolested by the French authorities. This is the only

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

Although the huts are of African type architecture, similar 342
to those of the Aucaner tribe, there is, at times, more wooden
board in the construction and less thatch.

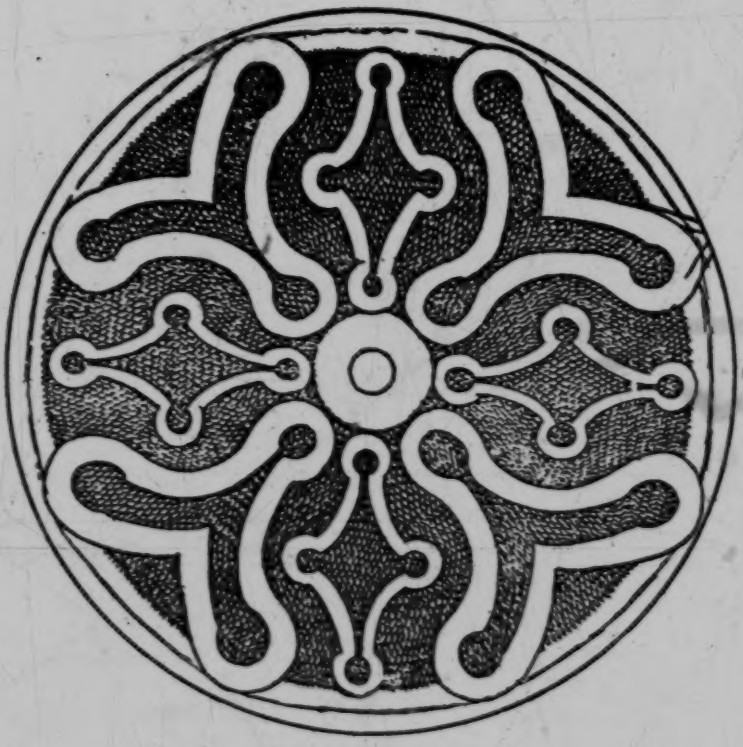
During the expedition of 1928 we were informed that the 316
Bonis, particularly at the village of Apatoo, were conversant 326
with the old West African method of smelting iron and manufacturing it into implements of various kinds. This claim proved to be entirely groundless. If there is any iron ore in the neighbourhood, these tribesmen do not know where it is, and most certainly do not understand how to smelt it.

It was in Africa that the art of iron working is supposed to have originated, and the iron work of West Africa, whence the Djukas came, is a thing of beauty. But the Djukas have lost this hereditary art. Among the Bonis, the work in metal seems to be limited to the soldering of copper French coins to bracelets made of iron or copper pipe, which they procure by trade or from the machinery of long abandoned French gold exploitations. They also make brass bracelets and anklets of considerable width out of brass piping obtained from a similar source. The piping is split with the sharp blade of an axe and hammered into shape with the blunt end. We were able to obtain a stiletto with an iron blade and a handle of brass riveted to it with copper, but we are under the impression that the blade, at least, is of French or Italian manufacture.

In their general habits as regards hunting, fishing, agri- 184
culture, canoe building, social customs and structure, dress, 189
and so on, the Bonis are quite similar to the Aucaners. They
speak a dialect of talkee-talkee which has distinct differences [191 ●
from the Aucaner and the Saramaccaner in that it contains a 197]
good deal of French words.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

1
1
[415
532]



Chapter Ten

DJUKA TALK

THE Bush Negroes have two languages. The ordinary tongue, phrases from which are scattered throughout this book, is known as talkee-talkee. It is the common *lingua franca* of the entire colony, used not only by the Djukas, but also by some of the Indians and by the Town Negroes of

197
191

1
1 [For caption, see category 116, p. 204. - Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Paramaribo. Outside the boundaries of Dutch Guiana it is unknown.

Talkee-talkee is a pure-vowelled pidgin language, as picturesque as the countryside itself. Its vocabulary is drawn from many tongues, although English and Dutch words preponderate. The Dutch words are either vestiges of the slave days or infiltrations from the daily speech of the present Dutch colonists. The English words may date from the British occupation of the country, which lasted, with some brief intervals, from 1630 to 1674; or they may come from the English-speaking colony on the west, brought in by British Guiana balata bleeders. As numbers of the early colonists were Jews, originally from Brazil, Spain, or Portugal, as well as from Holland, one still encounters occasional Jewish terms, like *trafer* (taboo), among the Bush Negro speech. There are also a few French words, like *bon,* which still retains its original nasalization. They come from the convict colony toward the east. A few Spanish and Portuguese words, like *balata* and *camissa,* add to the variety of tongues. And finally we recognize a certain light sprinkling of West African dialect, such as *pekein* meaning small.

When the bahkra becomes accustomed to local idioms, the learning of talkee-talkee is not difficult, and the many familiar or half-familiar phrases are of great assistance. At first glance one might expect to find the Bush Negroes speaking a language largely Dutch, but this is not the case. It is doubtful, says one commentator, whether Dutch will ever be widespread among them, because their ancestors who came from

F 197 /9 cont./
B [191] Guiana coast which is rarely heard spoken in the interior. The Creole patois of Santa Lucia is most widespread, and it is this that the Refugee Blacks use to address Europeans.

F 195 161 [316] [314] The Creole peopling of the Maroni Basin was formerly relatively numerous and had been since an ancient era. In 1877 Crevaux already speaks of the existence in Boni country of a placer with a force of about a thousand workers. At the time of the Lawa (1887) and Inini (1902) gold rushes, as well as in the period of the exploitation of balata (1920-25), several thousand people lived on rivers now entirely deserted. A good many Creoles living nowadays by gold work have been settled there for 50 years and more. Nevertheless, the Creole population of the interior remains floating without real attachment to the country. This rises from two essential causes:

F 182 361

F [236] —The absence of regular family life, the majority of the Creole women in the gold miners' villages being in the category of mistresses;

F [241] —The impossibility of living on agriculture in the manner of the indigenous populations because this agriculture can be conducted with a good yield only by a numerous family groups. Now, few Creole women of the Maroni are willing to devote most of their time to working the land.

F 433 439 The economy of the Creoles of the interior is therefore based almost exclusively on the search for products of very high price (gold, and formerly rosewood, balata), allowing them to pay for imported food. /10/

F 316 167 Progressive exhaustion of the auriferous beds exploitable without mechanical means is gradually leading the Maroni Creoles to leave Guiana. This movement, begun about 20 years ago, continued until 1956, no form of economic life having been able to replace gold mining. In 1957 a tendency toward stabilization was observed, principally because of the recent development of cattle and sheep raising.

F 161 233

/295 cont./

648 Indians to trade with them than with the Europeans and Creoles; the Boni are a graded society in which things tend to take place according to well-defined norms. It suffices to compare the Oayana Indians, who have kept the essentials of their civilization, with the Indians of the Oyapok to be convinced that the Boni have protected the former much more than they have oppressed them.

[464] Relations with the Creoles. The Boni are in constant contact with Creole gold miners and traders, for the benefit of whom they carry out many kinds of work (boating, tree-felling, construction). Most of them speak the Creole dialect very well and are well informed on the Creole type of life.

[191] [829]

On the whole, relations between the two groups are good. [829] On the Upper Maroni, it is mainly a matter of Creoles of African blood, who have come from the British West Indies, whom the Boni do not consider to be extremely different from themselves. Many have been settled there for a very long time, and individual friendships have become established; yet the two groups have not the least tendency to merge.

/296/ The Creoles have only scorn for the civilization of the Refugee Blacks, which reminds them of a detested African past. They have a feeling of superiority and do not cease exhorting the Boni to adopt their clothing and way of life.

829 The feelings that the Boni have toward the Creoles are complex; they clearly perceive that the activity of the gold miners is artificial and that isolated people are incapable of living by their own efforts in the midst of this pitiless forest. When they have become old and sick, the gold miners experience the worst distress and literally die of hunger until they are 888 evacuated to the hospice of Saint Laurent. Among the Refugee Blacks, old men are assured of a decent life in the midst of the members of their lineage, who surround them with affectionate respect.